

FUNERAL ADDRESS

— For —

Mrs. Mary Delia Foster

Sunday, March 1, 1925

By Rev. Jesse G. MacMurphy

Printed by Request of the Friends

The reading of Scriptures and prayers of the service at 1 p. m., in the Funeral Home of Richard H. Adams in Derry, on Sunday March 1, 1925, were by the Rev. Frederick I. Kelley, Rev. Jesse G. MacMurphy gave the following remarks:

The Psalmist has said: "The days of our age are threescore years and ten; and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years; yet is their strength then but labor and sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone". Our deceased friend has passed beyond the period of fourscore years, and her life of usefulness and devotion to her many relatives and friends deserves some fitting mention here today. Although born in Londonderry, she had lived in Nashua many years until quite recently she came to live with her brother in Derry. She was the widow of Charles W. Foster. She was a member of the Nashua Woman's Relief Corps, of the Olive Branch Lodge of Rebekahs, also a member of the MacGregor-Nesmith clan. She possessed a cheerful and affectionate disposition which endeared her to all who knew her. As one who had known her for a long period, and whose parents and grand

parents had grown up with generations of her ancestors, it seems pertinent that I should recall some circumstances of her birth and connections in the old town of Londonderry. In this relation I cannot refrain from classing myself as one of her mourners. My parents and her parents lived in close proximity, their houses were within sight of each other. Her mother's sister still lives at the grand old age of ninety years in the same neighborhood. The MacGregors, the Nesmiths and the MacMurphys were near neighbors. They grew up together and were familiar with the same scenes from the time when the town was first settled in 1719.

Our deceased friend's father was a MacGregor of a large family, of continuous generations, and residence in this town from the time when the Rev. James MacGregor, his wife, Marion Cargill, five sons and four daughters, settled here in 1719. Her mother was a Nesmith, also of a large family, of continuous generations and residence in Londonderry, from the time when James Nesmith his wife, Elizabeth MacKeen and children came here with the very first settlers. Our deceased friend's maternal grandmother was a Corning, daughter of Capt. Samuel, wife,

Mary Cochrane and granddaughter of John Corning, wife Sally Crowell, who came to Litchfield from Essex County, Mass., in early colonial days.

To emphasize my personal interest in this brief notice, Nathaniel Corning, (1804-1869) a brother of Mrs. Nesmith, (1795-1866), married a sister to my father, and descendants of that union continued in this town, so that my own aunt and uncle were also uncle and aunt to our neighbors, the Nesmiths.

With two of these Nesmiths I began to attend the district school as a child; one of them is yet living, in comparative health, as heretofore stated.

It has seemed to me one of the most wonderful events of my life of near eighty years, that I have found among the companions and playmates of my district school days twenty-five living persons. This survival of so many, nearing or beyond the allotted fourscore years, argues well for the conditions and habits of these companions of early school days. The families were large, often numbering ten or twelve in the home, as in the case of our deceased friend's own family, of which several well known brothers survive her; and her father and mother's families, each of a large num-

ber of brothers and sisters. In our day we have generally very few brothers and sisters, and are prone to reckon first and even second cousins as near relatives.

It is with the feeling of loneliness, that we meet and contemplate a parting like the occasion of today. From seventy and seventy-five years ago, we remember the days of our childhood: the same general outlook upon woods, and fields, and meadows. How familiar the flowers, the pitcher plant that we gathered, the red cardinal plumes, and the wild water lilies, and the fragrant sprigs of checkerberry. We followed the same meadow brook, and barefooted paddled in its waters. It is there today as it was when we were children. There too is the same swimming hole where we learned to swim.

It is unchanged; and from those far away days it never ceased in summer time to be the rendezvous of the young people of the neighborhood, though whole generations have come and gone.

It is only a short time ago that a very highly respected sister of our deceased friend died, and her body added to the ashes of her ancestors, while her spirit returned to God who gave it. And it will be remembered, that not many years ago one of the

brothers, who had past middle life, married a sister of mine, and lived in this same neighborhood, died. These were worthy citizens, embodying well the traditions and estimable qualities of the long lines of Londonderry ancestors this family represents.

While Mary Delia MacGregor Foster is much nearer and dearer to these three brothers, who remain to mourn her loss, than she is to me, yet for reasons of my own, and for my own loyalty to the traditions of the old town of Londonderry, where our names first appeared together in charter for homesteads. I should feel remiss in gratitude or sense of duty, not to avail myself of the opportunity to make these statements,

After this long pilgrimage on earth, and the parting at last with companions of a life time, what may be said of the future, the haven of rest, the paradise of God? Would it seem to be erroneous to base our reply on these considerations; namely, for what are we best fitted and educated? Will it be unceasing song and glory and worship? Or will it be a partnership of kindred souls, socially collected into groups, with similar disposition, similar ideas of mercy, truth and justice, like the societies of this world, only purified and perfected? Or will there

be "a new heaven and a new earth for former things are passed away" and truly the kingdom of righteousness will be found therein? Under the facts of these heads consider briefly the idea of heaven suggested by St. John the Divine: I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude which no man could number of all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne and about the Elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing and glory, and wisdom and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto God for ever and ever, Amen."

Under the second head, you may consider the idea of heaven suggested by the definition presented by the Divine Master, is recorded by the Evangelist St. John "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be

also." Under the first head there is a picture of the continuous worship, and praise and glory of heaven, as of an immense cathedral, with the multitudes of saved and redeemed, and this is one phase of the conditions in the future realms. Under the second head we have another picture, or phase, of the conditions in that other world, in no way conflicting with the first view of an eternal worship going on, while all the disciples of the Lord, Jesus Christ will also be provided with suitable abodes in the many mansions of the Father's house, and Jesus will be with them. There is a third conception of the promised land, the fields, and trees and waters, and glorious sunshine of the Divine Presence. The Lord is my shepherd; therefore can I lack nothing. He shall feed me in green pasture; and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort. This third picture is very old; and is adapted to the idea of continuous life and personal identity.

Some fifty years ago, there was written by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps of Andover, Mass., (afterwards married to Rev. H. D. Ward) a book entitled, "Gates Ajar," that received unusual attention and wide circulation. The author in dealing with the subject was thought to have assumed un-

warranted liberty, in setting forth what she conceived to be the true and obvious state of the citizens of heaven. Her idea being that in as much as this is a life of probation, we are all engaged in preparing for the future life. The studies, occupation and aspirations of our present existence intended to be helpful hereafter; and all our faculties will be given appropriate spheres of action. We may praise God in song, or on a harp, or even upon an organ, or piano. And we may be gathered in "a temple not made with hands," or we may be socially dispersed in a thousand "Mansions" duly fitted for appropriate service, or we may enjoy the Elysian fields, green pastures, running waters and everlasting gladness.

